by SWEET

(Internal note to our team: for each product/system, do two things (1) critically evaluate the thing, (2) discuss the strengths and weaknesses)

FEASTA is a free food finder for college students. It finds <u>events on campus</u> that offer free food. The events are posted by organizations that host these events.

FEASTA will be available on three platforms: web, iOS, and Android. Below, we critically survey three products/systems that share some similarities to our product, either in the concept, the service, the interaction flow, or the user interface.

Lunchbox

(Jordan: Pro's and Neel: cons)

STRENGTHS:

Lunchbox was the first popular app to give college students the ability to find free food amongst their campus. With their website displaying current stats with a total of 6 universities and 145 past free food events, it seems as if this system was on the verge of doing great things. However, in the iOS App store, Lunchbox's last update was more than 2 years ago. By analyzing this system, we can learn what they did right and what they could have done better to increase the popularity among their users.

One of the most obvious strengths in the iOS app version is the clean user interface. The first page the user encounters when opening the app is simple yet effective. It allows the user to select a university from the app's current listing and immediately gives the user the option to search for free food as soon as they enter a valid email address. Although the iOS app

is no longer functional, the website platform is. When you click on the button, it takes you to the listing of the colleges where the app is functional. The next page immediately after the university selection is a listing of the events with free food. The listing includes events for today, tomorrow and future upcoming events. The ability for users to post events that will happen down the road is another great feature. This allows for consumers to plan for these events in their busy schedule.

Immediately after you click on the event, you are taken to another screen which displays detailed information about the event along with a location and time stamp. The location and time stamp attached to the event's page provide the user with easy access to when and where the event will take place. Another strength that the event information page has is the "What's the catch?" section. This field is a critical aspect for the promoter side of this system. This allows the promoters to provide a description of their event to the consumer. The "WHY" there is free food. Another cool option that Lunchbox provides is an email subscription that allows users to stay updated on events. According to their website, the mobile applications also allowed users to send themselves a message reminder as well as post to their facebook. These are all great and effective ways to keep users interested in the application. Lastly, Lunchbox also provides a field in the profile section for the users to input their specific skills and interests so that the app can cater events to each individual users interests.

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Weaknesses:

One thing about the Lunchbox profile interface that was distracing was the field and major requirement. We feel that this field is unnecessary. Along with the profile interface, the inability to add pictures of the food also poses a conflict for the consumer of the application. Another setting that causes a problem to the profile page of the user is the employed and unemployed section of the user profile. Regardless of a students employment, they should be able to search for free food on their campus.

Eventbrite:

Eventbrite is similar to us in that it has both a website and a mobile app. It serves two kinds of users - organizers and attendees - similar to how our product will serve promoters (those who post events) and diners (those who search for events). To simplify the interactions and content, Eventbrite creates two separate apps on its mobile platform: one is Eventbrite for attendees, and one is Eventbrite Organizer for organizers. Meanwhile, its website remains integrated. A user will create an account using their email address, and can both search for events and manage his/her own events on Eventbrite website. Below, we will go over the apps first, then the website.

1. Eventbrite app: (Jing)

Eventbrite explore the most popular event around the local area of the user. It allows the user to search the upcoming event by selecting the location, enable to check the detail information about the event including the date, time, location, attendance requirement, and also the cost. For our app, all these feature we do cover, only except the ticket selling feature. We only focus on free food event, no ticket is needed to purchase.

Regarding the search feature with this app, the attendees can search the event by picking the popular locations in different country and you can even use the current location, the app can get your location once you allows to access your location. After selecting the area, there are twenty two types of categories to match the attendees' interest and the results can be viewed by clicking the taps on the top which are 'All, Today, Tomorrow, This Week, This weekend'. In addition to the sorting search, this app can also give you the general searching

result when you run the app, it called 'Top picks for you'. The apps will recommend some popular event within your area for you. This searching feature is one of the strengths in this app. Among this searching feature, the result will be literally searched the entire database and cannot be sorted by time, all the events that are held today will come up randomly, and attendees cannot view the events by time. That is the weakness of the searching feature.

The bottom navigation drawer for IOS has another two features except the 'top pick' feature and the searching feature that mentioned before: Likes and Tickets features. The Likes feature allows attendees add any events are interesting them as favorites, so that users can access these event by any time. The Ticket feature requires attendees to sign-in and login. Once attendees purchase any tickets of any events, they can check all the tickets in this page. Even though the event is free, you can still register the ticket, so that the organizer can count how many people are coming. You will not forget what events you are going to attend by using this feature.

After you click on one of event, you will go to the event page. It shows the information about the event, including event name, organizer, date, time, location, description, navigation and the related event. There is a hyperlink allow user to add this event to calendar. The navigation map can allow user find the location either using google map or apple map. These two functions help user to catch up the event easily. Those are the strengths of the app. Attendees can access more detail information about the event by clicking 'read more', but we cannot see the info directly without clicking 'Read more', it's not convenience and clear to the users. That's one of the weakness.

In general, other strengths are nice and organized interface, easy to access the related events and can share the event in multiple ways. One of the strengths which is similar to our app is to filter the free events (same as our free food). Additional weakness would be require too much data, it cannot be used same personal information except for credit card information during the ticket purchasing process, and no option just to browse event for specific day.

Eventbrite is an awesome app for the people who are activity enthusiast. What this app can be improved are expand the description of the event, create a searching option to filter the event by specific day, and sort the result by time also.

- Pros:
    - Has a hyperlink to help adding the event to the calendar of the phone
    - Gives the correct location either using google map or apple map
    - Compatible with iOS and Android
    - Comprehensive categories
    - Event can be share in multiple ways
- Cons:
    - The general info of the event is not clear to the user. Cannot read the detail info about the event directly, you have to click 'Read more'.
    - Require too much data, cannot use same personal information to purchase multiple tickets(excpt for credit card info).
    - Search feature literally searches the entire database instead if just your area
    - No option just to browse by the event on a specific day

2. **Eventbrite Organizer** app:

The main catch of having a mobile app for organizers outside the normal web-based platform is to enable on-the-go event management: create and edit events, monitor real-time ticket sales, check-in attendees, track attendance live, and quickly accept payments. Among all these features, we only care about event creation and editing since our product does not sell tickets or track attendance.

With this app, and specifically regarding the event creation and editing feature, an organizer-user can create new events, edit key event details and upload a display image. Any

updates made from the mobile device will automatically sync with EventBrite database. At this point, there are two strengths. First, you can style/format your event's description (e.g. bold, italics, heading levels, list, link insertion). This (almost) matches up with creating your event on a desktop. Second, after a new event is created, the Confirmation Pop-up Message has a "Share" button, enabling instant sharing. Even better, the sharing protocol hooks up with other communication apps existing on the phone, allowing easy sharing and decreasing the number of clicks and app browsing. However, one concern and one weakness exist. First, users can upload only one image per event. For our app, we will have to consider if multiple images should be allowed, for instance, in case of an event having more than one kind of food. The weakness is, one cannot duplicate or create repeating events.

The sliding Navigation Drawer (on an Android GUI) has four general-purpose items: My Events, Device Settings, Feedback, and Logged in as (user clicks on the last option to log out). "My Events" screen groups event items under three tabs: Live, Past, and Draft. Draft is probably a strength because it allows organizers to plan ahead their postings before making the events go live.

The Navigation Drawer has other items: Dashboard, Sell, Check In, Orders, Edit Event, Share, Guest Lists, and Event Settings. These items are event-specific, so whenever the app is launched, an event must be chosen as default to correspond with these actions. Usually it is the chosen event from the app's last launch. This set-up, however, may cause confusion to a few first-timers. One would expect when one launches the app, the main screen is the "My Events" screen with all the event listings. It is, instead, the "Dashboard" screen of the default event. And it is not always obvious how to get to the screen with *all* the listings. One just have to remember to slide the Navigation Drawer in and select the "My Screen" item, which locates under all these event-specific options, hence not as prominently positioned.

Similar user's confusion can be experienced when, from the "My Events" screen, you click on one of your Live events. Some users might expect immediately the "Edit Event" screen,

but in reality, the "Dashboard" screen (with ticket and check-in analytics) is brought up. This might take the organizer-users a little time to get used to.

Overall, other strengths of the app include a clean, modern, and easy-to-use interface, the informative *New* marker next to new features in the Navigation Drawer, and speedy launch. One reviewer on Google App Store complained that she can set up events but cannot see the ones she's signed up for. Whether or not this is a weakness is debatable because some users might want separate apps for simplicity and resource effectiveness, while others want everything in one place.

When we use this app for inspiration, we need to keep in mind that this app is for full-swinged event management, while ours is just for food posting and event finding.

3. **Eventbrite** website:

As said above, the Eventbrite website is fully integrated. Users log into one single account and have both the organizer's and the attendee's services available at their fingertips. Juggling many different features, especially those for the organizers, could be a nontrivial challenge, but the website handles it quite well. It boasts comprehensive content while maintaining a clean, modern, and uncluttered web interface that does not visually "harass" users.

Following are the strengths of the Eventbrite website from an organizer's perspective:

○ There are many extensions, e.g. Facebook, MailChimp, Wordpress, Salesforce, SurveyMonkey, that event professionals can integrate to their workflow.

○ Many great features are available for free, but more sophisticated and customized tools do exist with a plan upgrade. This makes Eventbrite service available to broad general event needs, while allowing competitive edge to those who are seriously invested in event management. However, we cannot tell how good and effective these upgraded tools are to a professional user because we do not purchase any plan to try them out.

- Preview option is available in several places, e.g. event design, attendee badge design, email template. This will be highly appreciated by organizers, especially those who just start out in this space, because they can see how their creations will look like to their attendees.
- Similar to the mobile app, newly added features are marked *New* to inform/guide users.

Strengths from an attendee's perspective:

- Each event page has convenient one-click buttons/icons/links: to "Share" (on different social media platforms or via email), to "Add to calendar" (different calendar services available e.g. Google, Outlook), and to "View the location on map." Even better, towards the bottom of the page, viewers can click on the appropriate icons to obtain direction to the venue by the means of transportation of their choice. Gone are the days where one clicks on Directions and Google Maps will show the driving directions, then one must click another time to switch to the public transit or walking tab.These will save users a lot of menu-clicking and redirecting.
- Every events one the main page shows the cost of the event on the right-up corner on the event icon.
- The events can be searched by name, categories, dates or location.
- At the bottom of the page give the user top categories to quick search, all the categories show to the user by using the related photograph.

Weaknesses:

- The webpage loads slowly.

As could be seen from the above analysis, the Eventbrite website does what it says and proves itself a professional service for event attendance and management. The only downside is that from the organizer's side, it can be a bit too sophisticated/overwhelming as first with so

many management tools and options. The organization/categorization of features might not be so intuitive to certain organizer-users. However, thanks to the clean and modern interface, users do not feel bombarded with a heavy cognitive load. Amateur/Hobbying hosts can get their job done, while professional event organizers can manage their event business to the sophisticated level that they need.

FeedShare

Feedshare may have been inspired by LunchBox and developed for Northwestern University in the same way we are attempting to have FEASTA for St. John's. Also like our app, it is cross platform (available on iOS and Android) which may contribute to its user interface lacking personality and function. Clicking on the FeedShare icon takes you to the app's only screen which displays all events from the beginning of time with the most recent showing up first. It is a simple white background with an Options button on the left where you can either log out or view a campus map and a Post button to the right where anyone can post. The listings do not offer much information except the type of food or items (since anything can be posted, people sometimes post about freebies like pens and stress balls), the location and how long ago it was posted. Clicking on a listing does nothing but show you the comments on that post.

Its simple interface has the benefit of being easy to use but with this it sacrifices some necessary functionality like users being able to delete their comments, favorite an event or see more photos of the food since only one is permitted. However, it does

allow for users to post photos in the comments but there is no guarantee that the food will even be from the same place since there is no designated organizer/handler for the event.To make a post, you simply click on the post button, enter the food's name, the location and optionally a picture that you take at the time of posting (it does not allow for a photo to be chosen from your gallery) and it takes your current location for the map. If you do not have location services enabled, a map will not be included in your post. You are not able to delete a post made by mistake or even edit an incorrect location. This is a serious flaw because there are many angry commenters stating that locations are inaccurate. Another major defect is that students from any university can post or comment even though the app is made for Northwestern. This could be an asset for FeedShare if it were marketed as such and made concessions for this such as separating the posts by school instead of having everything appear in one general feed.

Pro's:

- .edu verification which we will also include in our app through myunidays.com
- Time stamps help people avoid arriving after an event has ended. We will improve on this by also having the event disappear after the food runs out or the event ends.
- Compatible with iOS and Android. FEASTA will have a more appealing interface for both platforms and every function will be available on both.
- Includes a map with the exact location of the food

Cons:

- Overly simple, outdated user interface probably due to cross platform usability

- Complaints that people only come for the food and leave. We will inform the organizers that their event must be gripping enough to entice people after they come for food.

- Only one picture can be posted. Photo may be unappealing or of low quality. We will fix this by offering a pre-made gallery that organizers can choose from.

- Since anyone can post, this leads to security issues and multiple postings for the same event. We will prevent this by verifying the organizers before allowing them to post.

- Inability to delete comments or edit name. This is not very user friendly, if the name cannot be edited for security purposes, there should be the option to delete comments and posts for obvious reasons.

How to improve/change the systems:

Lunchbox:

Jordan Morin: An addition I would make to Lunchbox's overall functionality is to have .edu verification like Uniday's has. This will provide for more accurate and sustainable data by only allowing college students and faculty access to the app. Since this app is focused on providing college students with free food, .edu verification will allow for the user database to be efficient and effective rather than flooded with non-student consumers looking for free food.

FeedShare:

Improvements to feedshare can include fixing its servers. Some features of the simply do not work. For example, the map feature loads an error page whenever an attempt to access it is started. As we have previously mentioned, there is no way to delete a post once it is

submitted to the app. We created a test post to see if the app did actually function and there is no way to delete it. It can also be improved by removing non relevant posts. Removing items over one day old would save both the developers money in terms of space and users time in terms of seeing the items they could actually act upon. Lastly, feedshare could be greatly improved by allowing users to both sort food events by food category such as "burritos"/"burgers"/"pizza" as well as filter said events to show dietary restriction conscience offerings.

Member's Contributions

Lunchbox: Jordan- strengths, Neel - weaknesses

Eventbrite: Jing - Eventbrite, Thoa- Eventbrite Organizer, Thoa (and Jing) - Eventbrite website

FeedShare: Chelsea - strengths, Chelsea and Aaron - weaknesses